

# The Most Important Question

*“What is the most important theological question for God’s Church today?”*

In recent years, ministers and members functioning as teachers within the Churches of God have attached singular importance to one Biblical issue after another – writing articles, hosting conferences, etc., proclaiming favorite topics to be among “the most important theological questions of all.”

What does *God* have to say about all of this? Is one or another of these pet issues actually so crucial for our Christian growth? Or does our Almighty Creator have something much greater for His people to tackle? *What is the most important question for the Church today?* Are we really able to know?

Indeed, we *can* know. God reveals His mind on this matter in His holy inspired Word.

To get to the heart of this subject, let’s first direct our attention to a foundational Biblical principle documented in the books of Hebrews and in 1 John. In Hebrews 5, we find in verses 9 through 14:

And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. (Hebrews 5:9-14)

What are we to glean from this that is relevant to the moment? It is simply this. We must first master the fundamental basics of Christian practice, before we are equipped to move on to the more difficult and challenging topics. What are the basics? Many of you can already recite them from the book of Hebrews:

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. (Hebrews 6:1-2)

In all these, what should be our focus? How does Jesus Christ net it out for us?

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness ... (Matthew 6:33)

Christ commands us to seek the Father's Kingdom and His righteousness first – above and before all else. Thus, to the initial item of the command, just how do we set about to “seek first His Kingdom”?

[God] WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who **by perseverance in doing good** seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; (Romans 2:6-7)

“Perseverance in doing good.” How remarkably like the subsequent item which Christ commands us to seek first – “His righteousness.” What exactly constitutes the Father's righteousness which we are commanded to seek? The Psalmist explains in concise terms:

Let my tongue sing of Thy word, For all Thy commandments are righteousness. (Psalm 119:172)

The apostle John adds:

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1 John 1:5 – 2:6)

We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this

we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 4:19 – 5:3)

Based upon the above Biblical passages, it should be clear that if we are attempting to pursue advanced spiritual topics, without first being thoroughly grounded in the basics, the soundness of any and all of our resultant spiritual conclusions is ***seriously at risk***.

God contends that if we are not keeping His commandments, we will not know Him. ***How can we presume to comprehend the depth and breadth of someone whom we do not genuinely know?***

Has God's Church at this time mastered the spiritual basics? The overwhelming evidence speaks to the contrary. (See the [www.BelovedofGod.org](http://www.BelovedofGod.org) article "Why Are God's People Scattered?") Do you personally have these basics mastered? Do I?

I hope it doesn't offend anyone for me to say that I am not urgently concerned about technical questions which have little to do with repentance, and which I can expect to have answered instantly in God's Kingdom, if not before.

I do care urgently about the fact that we as God's people collectively, are in a pitifully faithless, lethargic, and unrepentant state.

Is this the time to be placing great spiritual focus upon the minute aspects of the promises to Abraham/ Joseph/ Ephraim, upon calculating the years until Christ returns or other specific details of end-time prophecy, or perhaps upon dissecting the role of Melchizedek?

Certainly, every element of Scriptural knowledge is priceless and immensely valuable. The author of Hebrews felt that there would be great benefit for the brethren in learning more of Melchizedek. He expresses the hope of providing mature meat in the future (Hebrews 6:3), anticipating that the brethren will yet demonstrate the requisite fruits of Christian growth. However, because of their spiritual weakness, he is nevertheless forced to a measure of present restraint (Hebrews 5:14) and to a significant focus upon the re-teaching of foundational spiritual concepts.

Accordingly, within the book of Hebrews, we find much focus upon the spiritual basics, including not only "the faith chapter," but also some of the Bible's sternest warnings toward repentance from dead works, with grave and sobering allusions to eternal judgment:

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned. (Hebrews 6:4-8)

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:28-31)

This is entirely consistent with the priorities which GOD has established, distinguishing His true teachers.

But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. (Jeremiah 23:16)

Thus, given the present spiritual state of the Body of Christ, emphases on secondary Biblical topics should give us cause for somber concern. While certain of these topics may be exciting and enriching; nevertheless, they are often technical Biblical questions which have almost no impact upon **what we must do** to obey God's law in our individual daily lives.

This is not to suggest that any Biblical topic should be deliberately ignored and never studied. That would be nonsense. Paul teaches that all of Scripture is given for our benefit:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

However, when we allow *less essential* questions to become the *center of our attention*, we manufacture for ourselves a seductive and dangerous distraction which will inevitably drain valuable time and energy away from the *more essential* spiritual matters.

Christ exhorts us to a pivotal focus upon our pressing need to constantly and fervently seek the righteousness of our Father, to wholeheartedly pursue the understanding and yieldedness that will empower us to cling to every one of His perfect Commands.

*“What then, is the most important theological question for God’s Church today?”*

For His Church today, and for every mortal human being, God records the fundamental query. Men pierced to the heart by the power of God’s word addressed that crucial question to the apostles:

**“Brethren, what shall we do?”**  
(Acts 2:37)

*“**What must we do** to bring ourselves into conformity with our Creator?”*

Not only for the Church, but for every mortal human being, the primary question endures. However, no less important in our own lives is the question which follows after – that question by which each and every one of us is now being examined:

**“Are we doing it?”**

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